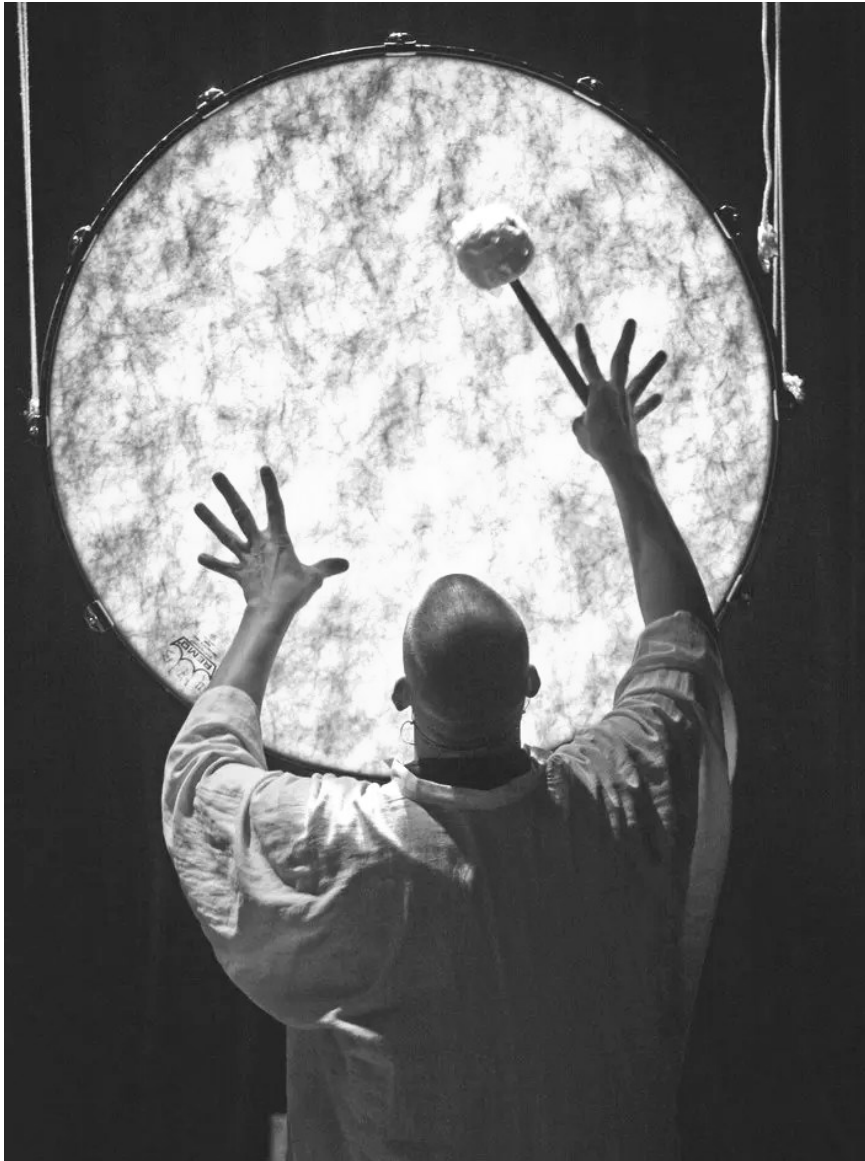


Music on the Stage



Osher at JHU, Columbia

Fall 2024, Wednesday Afternoons

Music on the Stage

WITHOUT A DOUBT, THE MOST COMPLEX COMBINATION OF MUSIC with other arts is found in opera, which was invented in the late Renaissance, brought to a climax in the mid Romantic era, and continues in one form or another to the present day. Yet opera is not the only medium to combine music with visual or dramatic elements. There is incidental music for plays. There are court masques, ballet, and modern dance. There is the explosion of popular entertainment from operetta and burlesque to the Broadway musical. There is the addition of theatrical elements to concert events, from chamber-scale experiments to stadium rock. And there are traditions in other countries such as Japan which began earlier and remain alive to this day. This course will attempt a roughly-historical sampling of the entire field. *rb.*



1. Our Revels Now (September 18)

Using the music for Shakespeare's *Tempest* as an anchor, this class sketches out the agenda for the rest of the course, exploring some ways in which music can be used on stage to dramatic effect.

2. Asian Arts (September 25)

The ritualized spiritual drama of Japanese *Noh* drama and the more colorful *Kabuki* which grew up in reaction to it exemplify centuries-old traditions that make us question Western assumptions.



3. European Evolution (October 2)

We look briefly at music in the Greek and Roman theater, before passing to the sacred drama of the middle ages, miracle plays and mummers, and the ubiquitous street musicians.

4. Music of the Courts (October 9)

From the renaissance through the baroque, the great courts of Europe incorporated music into many aspects of ceremonial life, including opera, invented in Italy around 1600.



10. In Smaller Packets (November 20)

Starting around the First World War, composers began to pull back from grandeur, creating highly innovative works in smaller forms, such as Arnold Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* shown here.



5. War of the Players (October 16)

By the 18th century, musical theater was also a fixture in public life—which led to rivalry between adherents to classical tragedy, lovers of comedy, and audiences attracted to vernacular ballad operas.

6. On Point (October 23)

Along with *bel canto* opera, the early 19th century saw the rise of ballet, and the cult of the *prima donna* in either medium. We follow ballet up to the great Tchaikovsky works at the century's end.



11. So Bigger's Better? (December 4)

In total contrast to the previous class, we look at the resurgence of sheer spectacle as a crowd-pleaser, whether in opera, on Broadway, or in the stadium light shows of pop concerts.



7. An Extravagant Art (October 30)

Doing the same for opera, we look at how 19th-century opera became first grand and then enormous, and watch the battle between seriousness of theme and extravagance of entertainment.

12. Outside the Box (December 11)

The content of this class has yet to be determined, but it will focus on works of the present century that dissolve previous categories, such as the not-quite-ballets of Alexander Ekman shown here.



8. Whitechapel and West End (November 6)

A theatrical tour of Victorian London, from Gilbert and Sullivan at the Savoy, through the melodrama that brought in the crowds, to the popular music hall variety shows in the East End.



9. Immigrant Broadway (November 13)

Not only did American musical theater follow from European operetta traditions, but much of it was written by first-or-second generation immigrants, often dealing with the immigrant experience.

For more detail, color illustrations, composer bios, and suggestions for further reading, see the class website:

<http://www.brunyate.com/MusicStage/>

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Illustrations: Cover: The performance group *Eighth Blackbird*; 1. *The Tempest* at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre; 2. A Japanese *Kabuki* mask; 3. Hildegard von Bingen's *Ordo Virtutum* in Sydney; 4. Monteverdi's *Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda* in Parma; 5. *The Beggar's Opera* in London; 6. *Swan Lake* in Saint Petersburg; 7. *Aida* at the Met; 8. Leonard Sachs, MC of the BBC music-hall series *The Good Old Days*; 9. The original *West Side Story*; 10. Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* in Gothenborg; 11. A Mötley Crüe concert; 12. Alexander Ekman's *Play* with the Paris Opera Ballet.